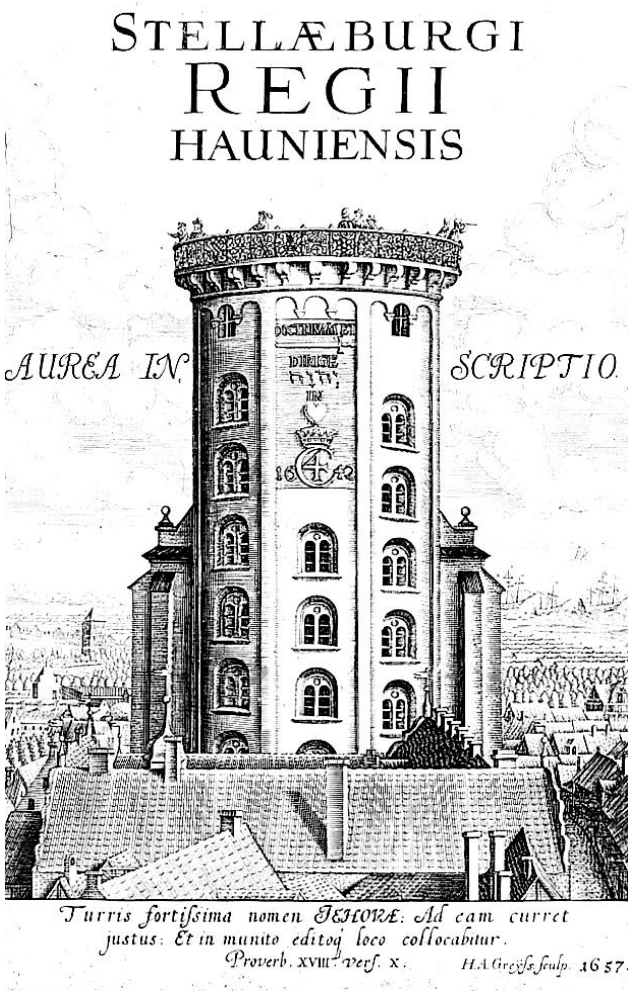
This document contains three pages dedicated to King Christian IV, mainly his relationship to witch trials. A single page contains an unofficial Danish translation of the 1617 Sorcery Regulation law, and finally a page about the Børsen monument. A famous building erected by the king, with an iconic dragon spire.

THE KING AND THE WITCHES (Denmark, 1600s)

About witch persecutions in King Christian IV's Denmark



Rundetårn

THE TOWER

This is Rundetårn (the Round Tower) of Copenhagen. It was erected in the mid-1600s by the Danish King Christian IV (the 4th). A man famous for his reign and buildings, but also for his superstition and for making it his personal business as a ruler to persecute people and have them convicted to death (by burning) for sorcery and witchcraft. It was a passion of his, aside from drinking, adultery, and the erection of monuments. The tower was completed in 1642, just six years before the king's passing in 1648. It was build for astrological observation. Today any tourist can go up the tower to experience the view themselves for the sum of 60 Danish Kroner (a little below 10USD). We talk a lot about his buildings but only a little about his crusade against "sorcery".

LUTHER'S INFLUENCE
In 1617, to mark the 100-year anniversary of Protestant Martin Luther's 95 Theses, King Christian passed a regulation called "Trolddoms-forordningen" (The Sorcery Regulation, perhaps translated "The Witchcraft Ordinance"). To provide some background on Luther's influence on the state, I will say that ruling and controlling through fear and brutality was nothing new; it was the norm of the age. But Luther was a superstitious extremist. He held the belief that any misfortune that occurs comes from the Devil and from those aiding the Devil. The wave of superstition and brutal tendencies that he played into were already present in society, but instead of being treated rationally, they were greatly enforced by the church and the state. In short, Luther's mentality meant that for any misfortune, an individual (or several) guilty of aiding the Devil had to exist. All the while the actual plague would ravage the land during his time. It was a time rich on misfortune. With this in mind came the documented witch trials that swept the lands. He was an outspoken misogonist and believed that a newborn baby showing issues should be killed because it was a "changeling" whom had been switched by demons. Take into account that pious life was incel life. Sadistic tendencies flourished. Even breathing was a sin, and God was very vengeful. This stance was not exclusive to Luther, but he was quite fanatic, even for his time. And a very influential figure.

THE SORCERY REGULATION (The Witchcraft Ordinance)
Back to 1617, the Sorcery Regulation of King Christian meant that not only those performing black magic were guilty of sorcery. The law was tightened, and now performers of white healing magic could also be found guilty of sorcery. The church had long seen white magic as a sin, and it was still being regularly used by the population. However, the punishment for white magic was fines and exile, while the punishment for black magic was death by burning. Most often, the way this was carried out was by tying a woman to a high ladder, which was then tilted into a large fire once the flames had built.

WITCH TRIALS
The witch trials of Denmark alone are such a massive subject that I can imagine touching further upon it as the dark days of the year draw nearer. I think most people have heard and understand the basic mechanics of how and why the cases happened. Often, they follow a very similar pattern. A woman is accused of causing harm through sorcery -often someone audacious or even mentally unwell in some sense. Often, the accuser is known to have had an argument with the accused witch prior to making the accusation. The accused witch is interrogated (tortured) until she confesses to being in cahoots with the Devil and points out about five co-conspirators. The co-conspirators undergo the same process, and if found guilty, they are all burned alive as a spectacle.

When a ship carrying the Danish King's sister on her way to marry the King of Scotland was struck by a storm, it sparked what is known as both the Copenhagen witch trials (where accused witch Ane Koldings was called "The Mother of the Devil") as well as bringing the trend to Scotland for the North Berwick witch trials.

Read about the two trials here:

Copenhagen witch trials (Denmark):
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copenhagen_witch_trials

North Berwick witch trials (Scotland):
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Berwick_witch_trials

CHRISTIAN THE 4TH AND THE WITCHES

To touch further on King Christian's relationship with witches, we can look at the two cases of "Maren Spliid" and "Christence Kruckow. " Maren Spliid was a woman who managed to be acquitted of her witch accusations. This did not please her accuser, Didrik, who claimed that Maren and two other witches had made him cough up an unnatural being from his throat. He went to the King, who reopened the case and had Maren executed. In the case of Christence Kruckow (the sole documented Danish noblewoman to be executed as a witch), she battled rumors and accusations of sorcery and being a witch her whole life, but it was not until 1621, when King Christian personally launched an investigation and gathered witnesses against her, that she was finally convicted as a witch and executed. Because of her nobility, she was beheaded before her body was burned. Fire was still an important part of the rite. It was believed that fire could cleanse the world of sorcery, just as water could reveal its presence during the testing of an accused witch.

Read about Maren Spliid here:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maren_Spliid

And Christence Kruckow, the noblewoman:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christence_Kruckow

With a subject like this, every detail left unspoken feels like a misconduct toward the truth. However, it was my intention to try and stay centered around the King, remembering how ruthless his stance toward witches was. I mean to speak more about the scapegoating tendencies of the witch trials if the time and energy is there. There are many names to be spoken, many torturous stories to be told, and many things that lie behind. In short, many lessons to learn from the past. Many realities to remember. King Christian IV is probably the most well-known and celebrated Scandinavian monarch to have ever lived. He is known as an erector of great monuments, and he ruled over both the kingdoms of Denmark and Norway during his reign. If you ever find yourself in the old cities of Denmark, you will see his buildings and his logo with the number 4 inside the letter "C", forming the "C4"logo. (see pic)

What follows is the Sorcery Regulation text, translated from an original Danish version with word explanations found on danmarkshistorie.lex.dk. Harmful sorcery was already punishable by death, but the new regulation introduced two main changes, as I understand it: 1) "White magic", which was popular among the population, was now outlawed and punishable by fine and exile, and 2) All authority officials were now required to report and prosecute any offender they became aware of, or risk being punished themselves as co-conspirators. Take into account that I might have made mistakes trying to understand the text. For the source, go to:
https://danmarkshistorien.lex.dk/Trolddomsforordningen,_12._oktober_1617

Regulation on sorcerers and their associates

(The Witchcraft Act/Sorcery Regulation) (translated and slightly simplified text, including word explainations from: ”danmarkshistorien lex dk”. Take into account that i might have mistaken something) -Oct 12, 2025

October 12, 1617. Copenhagen, Denmark

Since daily experience shows that some secret arts, such as **saying** *(to recite magical formulas and spells to heal, protect, etc.)*, **to mane** *(to conjure up/to make supernatural beings such as spirits obey one's will by means of spells etc.; e.g. to make them appear or disappear)*, **to measure** *(a magical measurement using a special kind of thread, partly used as a remedy against illness and evil spirits, also used as a means of divination)*, **characters** *(to inscribe or write characters, here with magical meaning.),* **to paint** *(to make images, here with magical meaning.)*, to **call back** *(to call back and show something by supernatural means.)*, to **choose certain days** of the week *(to designate certain days of the week as being lucky or unlucky.)*, etc., (since these things) - are constantly taking place and are treated as indifferent and permitted for the reason that they are believed to benefit and heal people and animals, and also because certain words of God are sometimes used and abused, notwithstanding that such arts are strictly forbidden by God Almighty, as they direct and divert from God and his natural help and medicine, to the Devil and (his) secret unnatural advice and means. Furthermore, these prescribed arts are found to be the first alphabet of all sorcerers, and to be the **true** origin and beginning of the evil and unfortunate work of sorcery. Since in this way God's wrath, and the abomination could be stopped, and prevented with God's help, - (because of all the forementioned) - we have been forced to think of serious and serving means and ways and therefore our Royal Council of the Realm* *(see note beneath)* thus determined and decreed, - and so hereby determine and decree:

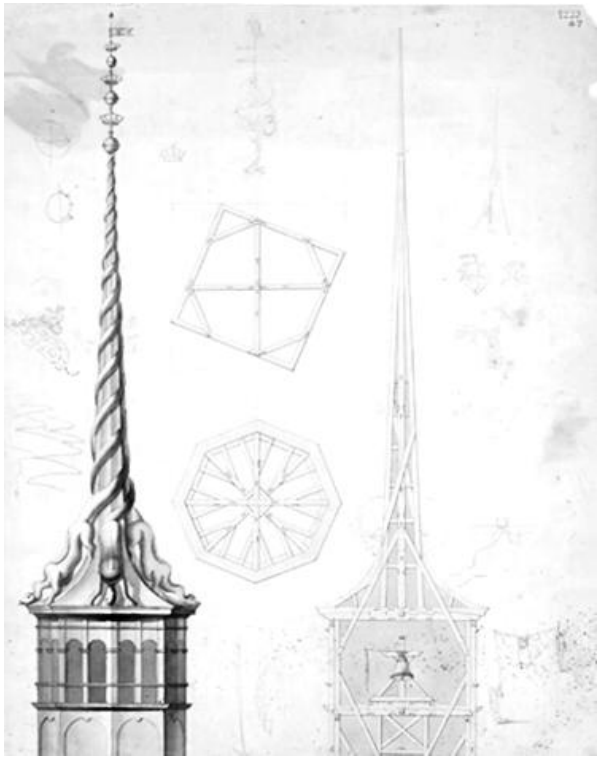
1. That if after this day, any one is found to be skilled and experienced in the prescribed arts and to practice and use them, then those who are of nobility shall stand trial and be punished according to what is known and decreed by us and our royal council over them; the others who are not of nobility shall have their estates violated and shall flee all our kingdoms, lands and principalities. Those who are accomplices of such people and use or allow their advice and deeds to be used for themselves (or their people), shall, **the first time**, if they are of nobility, stand publicly to confess their crimes, and commit to the nearest hospital o**ne thousand dalers** (311 USD); the others shall in the same way stand publicly to confess and be punished according to their wealth; **the second time,** if any one is found guilty in the same offense, then they, whoever they may be, shall be subjected, without exception, to the same **torment and punishment** as those who practice (and are experienced in) the arts.

2. As for true sorcerers who have consorted with the devil or associate with him, they shall be dealt with according to the law and the recess (note: often death by fire); but those who entangle themselves with such people and dare to have anything accomplished by their sorcery shall be punished (on their neck) without any mercy.

3. And so that our solemn will and decree may be the better complied with for the glory of God, we bid and hereby strictly command all our commanders and knights, as well as bishops, deans, priests, mayors, councilmen, bailiffs and all others who are in **authority and commission,** that they all, according to their conditions, **as soon as they become aware of it,** report, prosecute and have punished **all** those whom our decree indicates, if they themselves will not stand by us for that, as those who are accomplices of such people and consent with them.

Note: From the 13th century until the introduction of absolute monarchy in 1660, **the Council of the Realm** was the body that, together with the king, held legislative and judicial power in the Kingdom of Denmark. The **Council of the Realm** elected the king, and its power and influence were established in a charter that the king had to sign as a condition of being elected.

THE BURNING DRAGON SPIRE (Børsen, Copenhagen)



Drawing is courtesy of The National Museum.

Continuing on the subject of Copenhagen architecture and King Christian IV: One of the most famous and iconic buildings erected by King Christian IV is without a doubt Børsen (the stock exchange) in Copenhagen. The construction was completed in 1623. Located right next to Christiansborg Palace (the seat of the Danish parliament). The spire on the tower of Børsen consists of four dragons twirling their tails together. They are said to ward off enemies and fires. Originally, the dragon spire was made from lead, but in the 1770s, it was replaced with a replica made of wood. This was done out of fear that the original lead tower would fall from its massive weight. Now, all that I have said here would be fine and dandy were it not for the fact that BØRSEN BURNED DOWN LAST YEAR (2024). (!)

Considering the Lutheran mindset of the 1600s and how superstition played a huge part in the worldview of the Danish king. Whenever misfortune struck, it was believed to be the work of the Devil and those in cahoots with him. Basically every unfortunate event was blamed on sorcery. With this in mind, can you imagine how surely Christian IV would have blamed this fire on witches, and how many he would have had convicted to death by fire in the aftermath? There is an irony in his most iconic tower, meant to magically ward off fires, going up in flames. Just like all the people whom he had burned at the stake.

Børsen burned down on April 16, on the birthday of our Queen Margrethe II. Except, for the first time in a lifetime, she was no longer formally our queen. She had abdicated a few months prior in January to make way for the current Queen Mary and King Frederik X (10th). The cause of the fire was never found, but it was not believed to be a criminal act. Some kind of reconstruction is said to happen. Time will tell how that goes. Speaking of birth dates: October 12, when the 1617 law was passed, would coincidentally later (in 1875) end up becoming the birthday of Aleister Crowley, also known as "The Great Beast 666", one of the most famous and celebrated occultists in history.

Sources:
Information is mainly gathered from Wikipedia sources and **danmarkshistorien lex.dk**, along with the book ”***Satan's Store Port***” (Satan's Great Gate) by Johnny Thiedecke (1982), and a few other sources. I am not a professional researcher, but all information contained here can be traced to either Wikipedia or danmarkshistorien lex.dk by following the links provided in the document.

Here is the information page about The Sorcery Regulation - Witchcraft Act of 1617, as well as a scan of the original document, and a version with more modernized language and word explanations. The latter is the version I have tried to translate by using Google, and then going through the text multiple times while cross-referencing the Danish and English texts to understand the original meaning and convey it as correctly as possible. The very last part of the third and final paragraph of the regulation is the one I have had the hardest time making sense of, but as far as I understand, it means that people of official authority could face punishment for not reporting cases of sorcery that they become aware of.

Link to the source (again) about the Sorcery Regulation and the 1617 document:
https://danmarkshistorien.lex.dk/Trolddomsforordningen,_12._oktober_1617

Here is the english wikipedia for the Børsen building:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%C3%B8rsen

Here is the English Wikipedia for the Witch trials in Denmark:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Witch_trials_in_Denmark